

SELECT COMMITTEE ON COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS AND OUTREACH

ADMISSIONS GRANTED: THE FUTURE OF UC ADMISSIONS POLICIES

PURPOSE

California's long-term economic health can only be sustained if the state invests in the development of a skilled and educated workforce. An important part of the state's economic development is ensuring access to a higher education. Unfortunately, there is a disparity in access to colleges and universities, in particular at the University of California (UC). Moreover, low college eligibility rates and uneven levels of K-12 academic preparation among the fastest growing and most diverse segments of the population pose a significant challenge for the UC. A 1996 CPEC study suggests that "the growth in number of high school graduates over the next decade will be greatest precisely among those groups whose college going rates are the lowest... Assuming that present trends continue, Chicano/Latino and African Americans will together comprise almost half, 48%, of California public high school graduates by 2008, but only 17% of the UC eligibility pool."

The University of California is currently reviewing its admissions policies to develop a fair and "uniform system-wide admissions process." This hearing will focus on admissions policy as part of the solution for improving access to quality higher education. The Select Committee will specifically look at the UC's development of new admissions policies.

SELECT COMMITTEE OBJECTIVE

The focus of the Senate Select Committee on College and University Admissions and Outreach is to review the State's commitment of ensuring that all capable and willing students have access to a quality higher education. The Committee will examine the ways comprehensive admissions policies and outreach efforts can promote greater access to higher education for all populations, and in turn, provide an investment in the future of California's economy as well as improve the quality of life of disenfranchised communities. The committee will highlight the socio-economic and geographic disparities in college preparation, the different methods of measuring success and eligibility, and the institutions' commitment towards developing talent. The committee will address these issues by conducting a series of hearings, and town halls, and create a record that will result in policy recommendations and future legislation.

BACKGROUND

Population

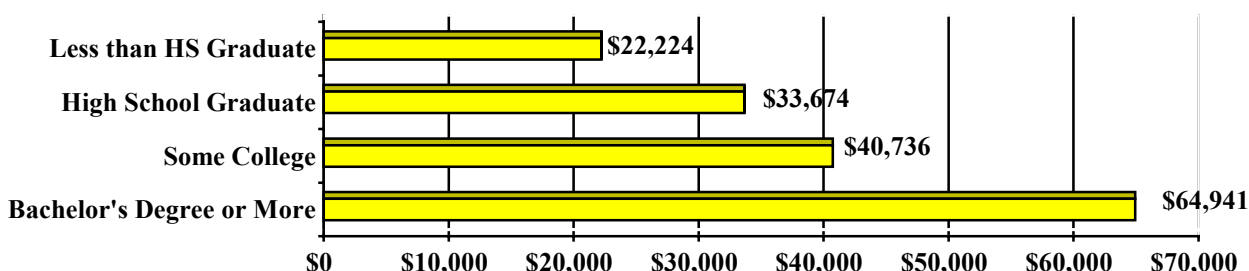
According to the 2000 Census, 33.9 million people reside in California. The State Department of Finance projects that by the year 2025, close to 50 million people will reside in California. While California's population grows, it increasingly becomes more multicultural. For the first time in the state's history, the current generation of school age children from ethnic and mixed

race backgrounds are the majority. In particular, Latino and Asian populations have the largest growth. Latinos increased from 12 percent in 1970 to 30 percent in 1998 and Asians increased from 3 percent in 1970 to 11 percent in 1998. This rapid demographics change in a state the size of California is unprecedented and raises significant public policy issues for the state, including the question of who has access to educational opportunities.

Education and Income

Level of income is directly correlated to level of educational attainment. Figure 1 illustrates that individuals with a bachelor's degree or more have a median family income that is almost twice as much as individuals with a high school diploma.

Figure 1. Median Family Income Nationally, by Level of Educational Attainment, 1993



Source: Towards a Greater Understanding of the State's Educational Equity Policies, Programs, and Practices CPEC, December 1998

Master Plan for Higher Education

In 1960 the State developed the Master Plan to structure a public educational system that “would assure all qualified students access to a quality higher education.” The Master Plan set up a tripartite system for public education recommending eligibility that the UC should select first time freshmen from the top 12.5% of all graduating California seniors and that the California State University draw from the top one-third of high school students. The community college system would be the foundation and would be required to accept “any other person over 18 years of age capable of profiting from instruction offered.” However, the Master Plan's eligibility criteria did not consider disparities in college preparation and access to resources.

Long Term Commitment to Reflect the Diversity of the State

In 1868 the Organic Act founding the University recongnized that *“it shall be the duty of the Regents...to so apportion the representaton of students, when necessary, that all portions of the State shall enjoy equal privelege therin.”*

In 1872, President Daniel Coit Gilman, in his Inaugural Address as President of the University of California, stated:

“This is ‘The University of California’ ...the University of this State. It must be adapted to this people...to their geographical position, to the requirements of their new society and their undeveloped resources. It is not the foundation ...of private individuals. It is ‘of the people and for the people’ ...It opens the door of superior education to all...”

More recently, in 1988, the UC Regents adopted a University of California Policy on Undergraduate Admissions, that underscores the importance of enrolling a student body that is representative of the state. The policy state:

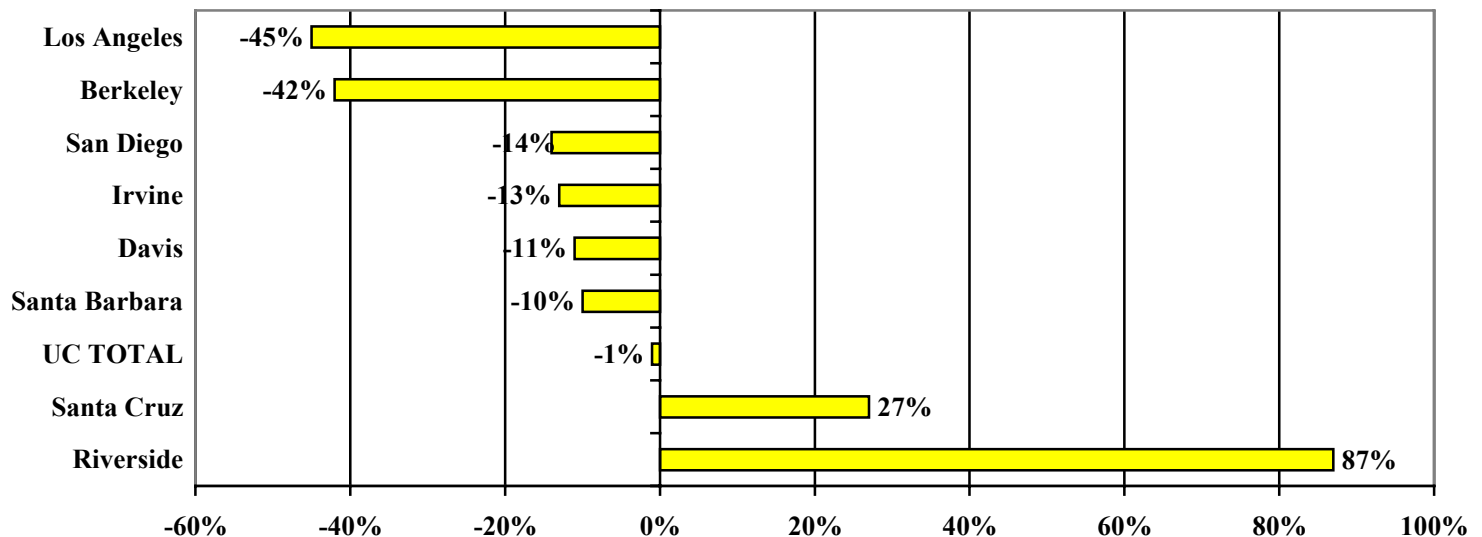
“[T]he University seeks to enroll, on each of its campuses, a student body that, beyond meeting the University’s eligibility requirements, demonstrates high academic achievement or exceptional personal talent, and that encompasses the broad diversity of cultural, racial, geographic, and socio-economic backgrounds characteristic of California.”

However, the UC has not been able to maintain a student enrollment reflective of the state’s population.

In the Fall 1995, the UC had the most diverse student population with 21% of the incoming freshmen being underrepresented minorities. For the Fall of 2001, only 17% of the incoming freshman are underrepresented minorities.

In addition to system-wide data, individual campuses have experienced dramatic shifts in admissions of underrepresented minorities. The most selective of the UC campuses have experienced the most significant decline in minority admissions. Figure 2 illustrates the change in admissions rates from 1995 to 2000.

Figure 2. Percent Change in Underrepresented Minority Admissions by UC Campus, 1995 to 2000



Source: University of California, Office of the President, November 2000

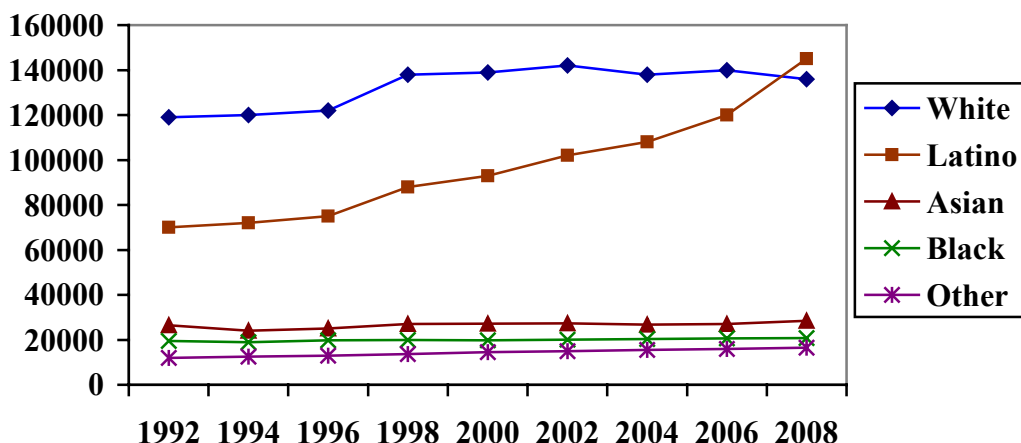
The redistribution of underrepresented minorities will stratify the UC system along ethnic/racial lines, with underrepresented students concentrated in the less selective and prestigious UC campuses.

High School Demographics

The overall number of graduates from California high schools is expected to increase from 300,000 to 380,000 by 2008. The number of high school graduates from groups that historically have been underrepresented in higher education- Chicano/Latino and African Americans- will

increase by 70%. Figure 3 illustrates the actual growth of California high school graduates from 1992 to 1999 and the projected growth from 2000 to 2008.

Figure 3. Actual and Projected Growth in California High School Graduates



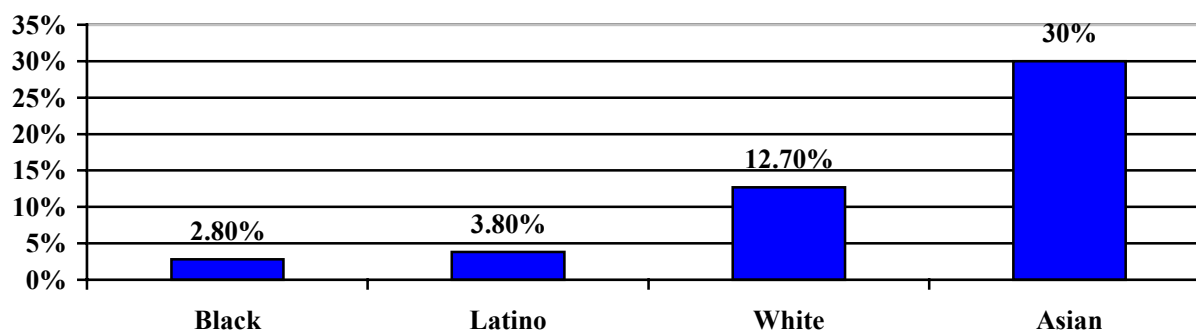
Source: Admissions Briefing Paper, Office of the President, November 2000

The differential in growth in high school graduation will increase the disparity in access to higher education given the unequal access to resources for academic preparation and uneven college eligibility across socio-economic levels and ethnic groups.

Disparities in Eligibility

1996 CPEC eligibility study illustrate that the UC eligibility rates continue to be lowest among groups that historically have been underrepresented in higher education. (Figure 4)

Figure 4. Percent of High School Graduates Eligible for UC by Race and Ethnicity

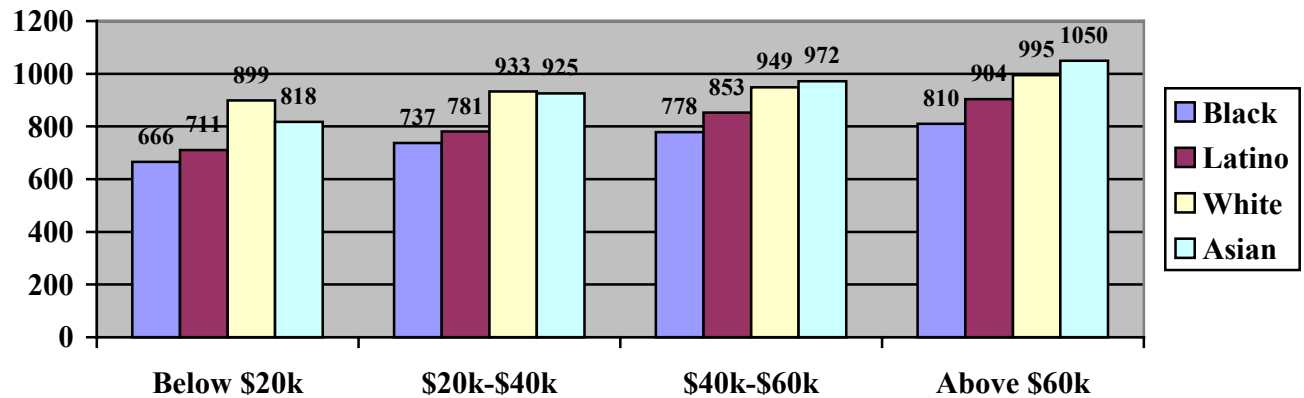


Source: Admissions Briefing Paper, Office of the President, November 2000

Preparatory Resources

To meet UC eligibility requirements, a student has to be academically prepared, i.e. take all the required coursework, have a strong GPA, and score well on standardized tests. However, not all of the public schools have the resources to adequately prepare students for college. For example, January 2000 data shows that 129 high schools do not offer any AP classes and 46 offer only one. In addition, students from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to score well on required standardized tests. As Figure 5 illustrates, scores on the SAT directly correlate to socio-economic status and race/ethnicity.

Figure 5. Average SAT Scores by Parental Income and Race/Ethnicity



Source: University of California Outreach Task Force Report (1997)

Current Admissions Criteria

Although all eligible applicants are admitted to the UC, they are not guaranteed admittance to their school of choice. Competitive eligibility has forced campuses like Berkeley and Los Angeles to select only 20 percent to 30 percent of their applicants. All of the UC campuses use a two-tier selection admissions process which considers the following:

- 50-75% of freshman admitted by each campus must be selected on the basis of the criteria described in items 1 through 10.
- The remaining freshman shall be selected on criteria described in items 1 through 14.

1. GPA
2. Test Score
3. Number, content, and performance in courses completed beyond the courses required for eligibility
4. Honors and AP coursework. Recommended: assess completion of coursework against the availability of courses at the applicant's secondary school.
5. Identified as "eligible in the local context"
6. Quality of Senior Year coursework
7. Quality of coursework relative to opportunities available in secondary school
8. Outstanding performance in one or more specific academic subjects
9. Outstanding work in one or more special projects in any academic field of study
10. Marked improvements in academic performance
11. Special Talents- performing skills, athletics, promise of leadership, community service, or achievements that demonstrate the applicant's promise for contributing to the intellectual vitality of a campus
12. Special Projects that offer significant evidence of an applicant's special effort and determination or that may indicate special ability to an academic program on a specific campus.
13. Academic accomplishments in light of the applicant's life experiences and special circumstances.
14. Location of the applicant's secondary school and residence.

New Initiatives and Developments Affecting Admissions to the University

On May 16, 2001, the UC Board of Regents rescinded SP-1, the 1995 resolution that prohibited consideration of race, ethnicity and gender in the admissions process. UC is still required to comply with Proposition 209, the initiative constitutional amendment prohibiting consideration of race, ethnicity and gender in state employment, education and contracting. However, the Regents again stated that “the University shall seek out and enroll, on each of its campuses, a student body that demonstrates high academic achievement or exceptional personal talent, and that encompasses the broad diversity of backgrounds characteristic of California.”

Currently, the UC is considering adopting admission’s policies that are in accordance with its commitment of ensuring access to all students. These proposals include:

Revised campus admission criteria:

Last month, the Board of Admission and Relations with Schools (BOARS) voted unanimously to end the two-tier structure and develop a comprehensive admissions policy, such policy would evaluate all students on a full range of criteria. Changes could take effect for the fall 2002 admission cycle. A decision is likely by November 2001.

<http://www.ucop.edu/news/factsheets/2001/tier.pdf>

Community College Dual Admissions program:

UC President Richard C. Atkinson has proposed a program that is an extension of the Eligibility in the Local Context program. Under the "Dual Admissions" proposal, the top 4 percent to 12.5 percent of students in each California high school would be granted admission to UC, provided they first complete a transfer program at a community college. This proposal is awaiting a vote by the Board of Regents this summer. If approved, this program could be implemented for the entering class of Fall 2003.

<http://www.ucop.edu/news/archives/2001/may24art1.htm>

Revised use of standardized tests:

President Atkinson has proposed that UC no longer require the SAT I test for freshman applicants. He has called for the development of new tests that are more closely linked to the high school curriculum; in the meantime, under President Atkinson's proposal, UC would use the SAT II achievement tests.

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